A forest is “a complex ecological system in which trees are the dominant life form.”

Forests develop and survive in regions with temperatures over 50 degrees Fahrenheit for at least part of the year and annual precipitation of at least 8 inches. These conditions occur over much of the earth and vary in important ways that enable different kinds of forest ecosystems, each with different flora and fauna, to develop. There are three major types of forests, based on their latitude. In cool, high-latitude climates, such as Canada, Alaska, Scandinavia, Russia, and Mongolia, there are coniferous or “boreal” forests made up of pines, spruce, fir, and larch. In temperate, middle- and lower-latitude climates, as well as tropical climates, there are “deciduous” forests. In humid regions near the equator, such as Central America, the Amazon basin, West and Central Africa, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, there are "tropical rainforests" made up of broadleaf evergreens such as magnolias, mahogany, Winter’s bark, sal, rubber trees, custard apple, nutmeg, Brazil nut, and many varieties of palm, including coconut, date, wax, oil, and sugar palm.”

According to the UN, forests cover approximately 30% of the earth’s total land area, store greater than one trillion tons of carbon, and house 80% of earth’s biodiversity. 300

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1 This background guide was written by Karen Ruth Adams with contributions from David Knobel (2007) and Nicholas Potratz (2015). © 2015 by Karen Ruth Adams.


million people live in forests, and 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods.7

Deforestation refers both to the thinning of trees in a forest and to the destruction of a whole forest. Deforestation can be temporary, as after a forest fire, or permanent, as the result of human efforts to harvest wood or clear land for agriculture or industry. According to conservation ecologist Stuart L. Pimm, “The Earth’s croplands, which cover about 15 million square km (5.8 million square miles), are mostly deforested land.” Of these, most “were once temperate forests or subtropical forests including forests in eastern North America, western Europe, and eastern China.” Another 2 million square km of forests in North America and Europe have been cleared for grazing, as have 5 to 9 million square km of tropical forests. According to Pimm, “almost half the world is made up of ‘drylands’ – areas too dry to support large numbers of trees.” Such areas are also used for grazing.8

In many regions, humans have caused cycles of deforestation and reforestation. For example, “about half of eastern North America” was deforested between the beginning of European colonialism in the 1600s and the 1870s. Since 1870, “the region’s forest cover has increased, though most the trees are relatively young.”9

According to the UN, as a result of declining deforestation, increasing afforestation and forest management by countries such as Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Rwanda and Viet Nam, and some natural forest expansion, the earth experienced a net loss (the difference after subtracting gains in forest cover from losses) of 5.2 million hectares of forests annually (about twice the size of Massachusetts), down from annual losses of 8.3 million in the 1990s. Despite the improvement, the overall percentage of the earth’s surface covered by forests fell from 32% in 1990 to about 30% in 2015. The regions with the highest rates of deforestation were South America, with net losses of 3.6 million hectares per year between 2005-2010, and Africa, with net losses of 3.4 million per year between 2005-2010. In addition, since 2000, Australia has experienced large losses due to severe drought and fires.10


9 Pimm, “Deforestation.”

According to the UN, "deforestation remains alarmingly high in many countries."\(^{11}\) What can the General Assembly do to encourage member states to stop deforestation in their own countries and worldwide?

**History and Current Events**

According to the UN, deforestation is a cause for concern for three reasons. First, as noted above, forests provide homes and livelihoods to millions of people. When forests are cleared to harvest wood or plant crops, graze animals, mine, or develop roads and buildings, the people who live in the area must move and find new ways to support themselves. In Brazil, the Philippines, and other countries, people who have refused to move have been compelled to do so by force. As a result, there are many violent conflicts related to deforestation.\(^{12}\)

Second, deforestation imperils Earth’s biodiversity. As forests disappear, it is harder not only for their human occupants to survive, but also for the many animals and plants that live within them. Biodiversity loss is of particular concern because 96% of contemporary deforestation occurs in tropical rainforests, most of which are “primary forests” that have never before been cut.\(^{13}\) In the world's tropical rainforests, new species of trees, plants, animals, birds, and insects are “found every year.”\(^{14}\) Some of these species have been found to have important nutritional and medicinal qualities. Moreover, according to the World Health Organization, “People depend on biodiversity in their daily lives, in ways that are not always apparent or appreciated. Human health ultimately depends upon ecosystem products and services (such as availability of fresh water, food and fuel sources).”\(^{15}\) According to scientists, “tropical forests such as the Amazon have the greatest concentrations of animal and plant species of any terrestrial ecosystem. Perhaps two-thirds of Earth’s species live only in these

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\(^{15}\) Forest Habitat,” World Wildlife Fund,
forests. As deforestation proceeds, it has the potential to cause the extinction of increasing numbers of these species.\textsuperscript{16}

The third reason the UN is alarmed by continuing deforestation is that forests absorb carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from humans and livestock.\textsuperscript{17} Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the 1700s, carbon emissions have grown, and forests have been cleared. As a result, the earth has experienced a “greenhouse effect” that has increased temperatures, made weather patterns more severe, and raised sea levels. According to the hundreds of scientists involved in the UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "From 1750 to 2011, CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement production have released 375 GtC [about 70% of carbon emissions] to the atmosphere, while deforestation and other land use change are estimated to have released 180 GtC [about 30% of carbon emissions]."\textsuperscript{18} Today, deforestation contributes between 12-20% of annual carbon emissions.\textsuperscript{19}

In its most recent (2013) report, the IPCC documented the effects climate change has already had worldwide, including:

-- Increasing land and ocean surface temperatures over the last 135 years

-- More frequent extreme weather events since 1950

-- Warming lakes and rivers, which reduces water quality and increases the likelihood of floods

-- Reducing growing seasons in dry climates, as well as changing patterns of rain and snow melt, which alter hydrological systems and negatively affect the quality and quantity of water in some regions

-- Changing ranges of plant and animal species, which affects agricultural production\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Pimm, “Deforestation.”

\textsuperscript{17} United Nations, Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, pp. 48-49.


\textsuperscript{19} UN News Centre, "UN Wraps Up Year of Forests."

In addition, the IPCC discussed the likely future impacts of climate change, including:

-- increased glacial melting and run-off in high latitudes, which will reduce the availability of drinking water in parts of the world inhabited by one-sixth of the world’s population

-- increased incidence of drought and spread of desertification

-- frequent heavy precipitation events, causing floods

-- extinction of plant and animal species, with effects on human food supply

-- rising sea levels, causing coastal erosion and necessitating resettlement of urban populations.

According to the IPCC, all of the countries and regions of the world will be affected by climate change, both directly by the changes listed above and indirectly by the disruptions in other parts of the world. But “wage-labor-dependent poor households that are net buyers of food are expected to be particularly affected due to food price increases, including in regions with high food insecurity and high inequality.”21

Deforestation and climate change interact in a vicious cycle in which, on the one hand, warmer temperatures make fires more likely and, on the other hand, fires contribute to further deforestation. In recent decades, large forests have burned in Russia, China, Alaska, and Australia.22 In 2009, fires that began in Greek forests spread to 14 towns near Athens, burning “more than 30,000 acres of forest, farming fields, and olive groves,” and necessitating the evacuation of more than 20,000 people.23

Soil erosion and high winds are additional effects of deforestation. Like fires, they contribute to further deforestation via landslides, mudslides, flooding, and desertification. According to geographer Stuart Pimm, “About

400,000 square km … of tropical deforested land exists in the form of steep mountain hillsides. The combination of steep slopes, high rainfall, and the lack of tree roots to

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bind the soil can lead to disastrous landslides that destroy fields, homes, and human lives."^{24}

Why Are Tropical Forests Being Deforested at Such High Rates?

According to Pimm, “Worldwide, humid forests once covered an area of about 18 million square km... Of this, about 10 million square km... remained in the early 21st century. Given the current annual rates of deforestation, most of these forests will be cleared within the century. Indeed, in some places, such as West Africa and the coastal humid forests of Brazil, very little forest remains today."^{25}

Why are tropical forests being cleared at such high rates? According to Pimm, there are five answers to this question. First, forests in cool and temperate climates “are easier to deforest and occupy” than those in humid regions, which have already been “targeted” by humans.^{26} Second, internationally there is high demand for wood for buildings, furniture, and paper. Many tropical deciduous forests (monsoon forests) and rainforests are cleared by commercial logging companies that sell the wood on international markets. Third, there is also high and growing international demand for meat. As a result, cattle ranches have spread into areas that were once forested. Fourth, companies often cut down the diverse, native trees in primary forests to plant “economically valuable” trees such as rubber trees and oil palms, as well as crops for which there is high international demand, such as soy, corn, coffee, and cocoa. Fifth, local people often practice “slash-and-burn agriculture,” in which “small-scale farmers clear forests by burning them and then grow their crops in the soils fertilized by the ashes. Typically, the land produces for only a few years and then must be abandoned and new patches of forest burned.”^{27}

Sociologists and political scientists also note a sixth answer to this question. Although developed countries were initially the largest contributors to forest loss, as their trade and development increased, states have shifted environmentally-degrading activities to less-developed countries. As a result, although developed countries use most of the world’s natural resources, they experience less environmental degradation. This is referred to as “unequal ecological exchange.”^{28} Today, emerging developed countries such as China are engaging in the same practice by stabilizing their forests, but continuing to purchase food, wood, minerals,

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^{24} Pimm, “Deforestation.”

^{25} Pimm, “Deforestation.”

^{26} Pimm, “Deforestation.”

^{27} Pimm, “Deforestation.”

and other forest products from other developing countries. In general, developed countries have strict environmental regulations and the capability to enforce them. By contrast, less-developed countries have loose environmental regulations and little enforcement capacity. In recent years, developed country regulations have included incentives to use ethanol — derived from crops such as corn — for fuel instead of petroleum. Although this may have reduced carbon emissions, it has increased deforestation.

Places of Particular Concern

As a result of all of these factors, the Amazon rainforest, which is the “largest continuous tropical rainforest in the world” in the world, is being cleared very quickly. Most of the Amazon rainforest is in Brazil, which, along with Indonesia, accounted for more than half of the world’s deforestation between 1990-2010, particularly because it has provided substantial subsidies to companies that promote deforestation for agricultural products such as soy and beef. Subsidies to these companies were over 100 times more than the amount of aid Brazil received to preserve its forests. This case exemplifies the tension between a country’s efforts to promote growth and reduce poverty, while also protecting their forests and other natural resources. The Amazon rainforest also extends to Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela. As of 2013, the Amazon had forest losses totaling more than 750,000 sq km, nearly the size of South Carolina, since 1970.

In Southeast Asia, deforestation has become a major issue in large part because of China’s demand for forest products. After massive flooding was blamed on deforestation in


31 Lucy Siegle, “Has the Aazon Rainforest been saved, or should I still worry about it?” The Guardian, 9 August 2015, available at http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/aug/09/has-the-amazon-rainforest-been-saved


1998, China implemented a logging ban that was largely successful in mainland China but exacerbated the problem in the rest of Southeast Asia, which sold timber to China when its domestic supply fell. The ban effectively outsourced China's deforestation problem to the rest of Southeast Asia including Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia, and Papua New Guinea. Because of the 1998 ban, prices for wood products rose in China, and in 1999, China loosened import restrictions on wood products. Now China imports most of its timber and wood pulp from Indonesia, a country that contains 10% of the Earth's remaining tropical forest and has experienced large-scale deforestation for decades. This is a good example of unequal ecological exchange and also illustrates the adverse effects of a logging ban. A logging ban in one area may be heralded as a success, but in the competitive market for timber goods, the supply will eventually reach the demand.

Much of the deforestation in Africa is the result of slash-and-burn agriculture, also known as “shifting cultivation.” This worked in the past, when farmers could leave fields for 10 years or more and return to them later when their fertility had been restored. But demographics and market forces have made this method unsustainable.

African forests have also been cleared for timber, mining, and commercial agriculture. As in other regions, massive flooding has been attributed to deforestation. Forests provide stability to the ground and help prevent soil erosion. When forests are removed, mudslides and flooding increase.

**Stopping and Reversing Deforestation**

Since 1990, many countries have embarked on efforts to stop and reverse deforestation. Among the solutions they have tried are setting aside primary forests in protected areas and engaging in reforestation. These efforts have been assisted in various ways by other countries and by international organizations and corporations.

*Protected areas* are places like national parks, national forests, and tracts of land reserved for indigenous people that are protected from deforestation by national legislation. Some areas that are set aside are primary forests that have never (or at least not in human memory) been logged or burned. According to the UN, the establishment of protected areas

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shows a “positive trend.” Between 1990 and 2010, protected areas increased by 94 million hectares. By 2011, 13% of forests worldwide were in protected areas.\(^{39}\)

In 2006, the governor of the northern Para state of Brazil decreed the protection of a part of the Amazon that is larger than England. Because the area is contiguous with protected areas in the neighboring countries of Guyana, Surinam, and French Guiana, it will enable many important species to survive.\(^{40}\) According to conservationists, protected areas have significantly reduced deforestation, which has been estimated to be as much as 20 times higher outside reserves than inside. Enforcement is difficult, however. Illegal logging still takes place and can be very hard to police.\(^{41}\) In addition, human and indigenous rights organizations, such as Survival International, worry that protected areas may be an excuse to evict people from their traditional lands.\(^{42}\)

Reforestation, or the planting of new trees, is another widely used strategy. Reforestation has two main purposes. The first is to grow trees for timber, furniture, and paper. Areas that are reforested for this purpose are known as industrial plantations. The second purpose of reforestation is to reestablish human and animal habitats and livelihoods, supply wood for fuel, and preserve the soil and water of a region. Areas that are reforested for this purpose are known as non-industrial plantations. According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO):

In many countries, particularly in the developing world, the end purpose of the plantations is not clearly defined at the outset. In some of these cases, valuable tree resources are established which coincidentally match future needs. However, in others the lack of planning may result in plantations which have little commercial value and a low potential for local use.\(^{43}\)

According to the FAO, about 50% of the forest plantations in Asia and more than 90% of forest plantations in North, Central, and South America are for industrial purposes. “Although accounting for only 5% of global forest cover, forest plantations were estimated in the year 2000 to supply about 35% of global roundwood, with anticipated increase to 44% by


\(^{40}\) BBC News, “Rainforest gets protected status.”


\(^{43}\) UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), “Global data on forest plantations resources,” available at [http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/Y2316E/y2316e0b.htm](http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/Y2316E/y2316e0b.htm).
2020. In some countries forest plantation production already contributes the majority of industrial wood supply.\textsuperscript{44}

One of the challenges of reforestation is that the often planted fast-growing, such as eucalyptus and pine, are rarely native to the area.\textsuperscript{45} In countries such as China, where there is high demand for wood for buildings, furniture, and paper, it may make sense to establish plantations of wood species that would otherwise be imported. But, at the same time, there may be detrimental long term effects from this in terms of changes to local ecosystems. Among the detrimental effects can be a lack of “fit” between the forest products local people have traditionally used and what is now grown in the area. Another problem is that plantations are often made up of a single species, so they do not have the diversity and therefore the positive ecological effects of a forest.

Reforestation and afforestation (tree planting where there was not previously a forest) have been accomplished in different ways in different countries. China has achieved extensive afforestation with its “Green Wall of China” program in which citizens have planted 66 billion trees to stop the advance of the Gobi Desert. Critics remain concerned with the project, however, as many trees fail to acquire enough water in the drylands where they are planted. Still, others argue that “with the right plants and methods, it could succeed.”\textsuperscript{46}

In Kenya, a professor of veterinary anatomy, Dr. Wangari Maathai, began a tree-planting revolution in her country and throughout Africa by paying poor women to plant trees “to fight erosion and create firewood for fuel and jobs for women.” To bolster these efforts, Maathai began an organization called The Green Belt Movement.\textsuperscript{47}

Supply chain interventions, in which a state intervenes in a commodity’s production and distribution, also appear to have some success. A 2014 study by a group of scientists and economists found that Brazilian policies establishing punitive strategies that increase the risk of participating in deforestation, such as fines or impeding access to credit for regions that did not comply, reduced the amount of forest loss as farmers in the regions worked collectively to abate deforestation, while still promoting increased production of soy and beef.\textsuperscript{48} In recent

\textsuperscript{44} FAO, “Global data on forest plantations resources.”

\textsuperscript{45} Pimm, “Deforestation.”


\textsuperscript{48} Nepstad et al., “Slowing Amazon Deforestation,” pp. 1119-1120.
years, the European Union has offered another strategy that uses incentives to promote reforestation and afforestation, instead of punishments for deforestation, by paying farmers to convert farmland to forest.\textsuperscript{49}

*International assistance* for protected areas comes from many sources. Many developed countries, international organizations (e.g. the EU and World Bank), and corporations give financial aid to less-developed countries to help them purchase land to set aside or reforest land. In addition, in recent years, countries that ratified the Kyoto Protocol established a system in which “carbon credits” could be bought and sold. Countries that had forests received credits for each square km or hectare they had, and they could sell the credits to other countries that emitted more carbon than they had forests to offset. Developed states could also gain credits through reforestation projects in developing countries. Today individuals and corporations can also purchase carbon credits. This encourages forested countries to maintain and increase the size of their forests.\textsuperscript{50}

One of the limitations of carbon credits is illustrated by the United Kingdom. Just to offset carbon emissions from cars, British forests would have to cover \( \frac{3}{4} \) of the country's land area. Although British forests have doubled over the past 60 years, there is little room left for them to expand.\textsuperscript{51} Thus British lifestyles continue to depend on unequal ecological exchange. This example demonstrates that, to address climate change, all countries must work to maintain and expand their forests, and all countries must reduce their carbon emissions. Historically, developed countries have been the largest emitters of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs). In 2000, the US was responsible for 20 percent of all emissions, and the 25 member states of the European Union were responsible for 14 percent. In 2000, China contributed 15 percent of GHGs. The other top-five emitters were Russia and India, each with 6 percent of the world total. Just 25 (13\%) of the UN's 192 member states accounted for 83\% of worldwide emissions.\textsuperscript{52} Developing countries' emissions have grown since then, especially


those undergoing industrialization such as China, which has used more electricity and gained more cars.53

**Previous Committee Work on This Topic**

Deforestation became a major international political issue in 1992, when Agenda 21 was adopted by 179UN member states at the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Because it was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the conference is often referred to as the Rio Conference. With regard to forests, the primary objective of Agenda 21 was “To strengthen forest-related national institutions, to enhance the scope and effectiveness of activities related to the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, and to effectively ensure the sustainable utilization and production of forests’ goods and services in both the developed and the developing countries.”54

The 1992 Rio Conference is also where the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which first addressed carbon emissions, was drafted. The Kyoto Protocol (2005) is a related treaty in which 37 developed countries pledged to collectively reduce their carbon emissions by 5% below 1990 levels by the end of the first commitment period in December 2012. On 8 December 2012, states adopted the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, in which they established a second commitment period from 2013-2020.55 Some have critiqued the initial treaty, however, for failing to instill substantial change. Even taking the carbon credit system into account, which allowed many states to meet their goals, developed countries have not joined the agreement. In fact, carbon emissions actually increased by 50% globally between 1990 and 2012.56 Exacerbating the problem, in addition to the US (which never ratified the treaty), Canada withdrew during the first commitment period, and joined Russia and Japan by saying that they would not agree to the new commitment period.57

In December, 1992, the General Assembly (GA) established the Commission on Sustainable Development to monitor implementation of Agenda 21. In addition, the GA has


held three Rio follow-up summits in 1995, 2002, and 2012. At the Rio+20 conference held in Brazil in 2012, states endorsed the outcome document entitled the Future We Want, renewed their commitment for sustainable development and the need to prevent and reduce deforestation, as well as committed to enhanced efforts at promoting sustainable methods of resource production and consumption. In addition, the conference initiated the process of creating the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals as their deadlines approach at the end of 2015. The working group tasked with creating the new goals has included protection of ecosystems (Goal 15), particularly halting deforestation and restoring forests by a to be determined percentage by 2020 (Goal 15.2). In September 2015, the UN will hold a Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda (SDGs).

In October, 2000, the UN Economic and Social Counsel (ECOSOC) adopted Resolution 2000/35, which created the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The objective of UNFF is “… the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.” Every UN member state is a member of UNFF, which holds annual meetings to encourage and coordinate sustainable and equitable forest management.

In 2008, the United Nations, in coordination with existing UN organizations (the Food and Agriculture Organization, UN development Programme, and UN Environment Programme), created the UN-Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (UN-REDD) programme. The program works by helping states to establish national strategies for dealing with deforestation, as well as providing analysis, data, methods, tools, and best practices for combating degradation of forests within their borders. It has since created a subsidiary

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organization known as REDD+ to offer grants to developing countries for developing strategies to reduce emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation.\(^{62}\)

In 2011, the GA established that year as the International Year of Forests, having the theme of “Celebrating Forests for People.”\(^{63}\) In 2012, the GA adopted the Resolution International Day of Forests, which established March 21 of each year as the International day of Forests "to communicate the vital role forests play in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability and food security."\(^{64}\)

**Conclusion**

How can the GA encourage UN member states to stop and reverse deforestation, instead of just moving it from one country to another? As you write your position paper on this topic, consider the following questions:

- Does your country have forests? If so, what kind of forests does it have? If not, why not?
- What is the role of forest products in your country’s economy (exports, imports, manufacturing) and your people’s lives and livelihoods?
- To what extent is deforestation occurring in your country and/or in neighboring countries?
- Has deforestation in your country or region had any of the effects discussed above (migration and poverty, political conflicts, biodiversity loss, fires, floods, etc.)?
- To what extent is your country experiencing or likely to experience the effects of climate change? What is it doing to contribute -- or limit its contribution -- to the greenhouse effect?
- What measures has your country taken to stop deforestation within its borders and/or in other countries?
- What can the GA do to address deforestation while at the same time considering the economic and other needs of member states?

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Recommended Reading

Amnesty International. Website. Available at http://www.amnesty.org/

Amnesty International is a non-governmental organization (NGO) concerned with human rights abuses. To determine if your country is considered by AI to have carried out or to have been the site of human rights abuses related to deforestation, go to the site and search on the key word, “deforestation.”


This page discusses and provides a map of the major floral regions of the world. On the Encyclopaedia Britannica page for your country, you can read about its climate, flora, and fauna.


Greenpeace is an NGO devoted to a variety of international environmental issues. This page provides a brief overview of some strategies that Greenpeace recommends for combating deforestation.


This article from the ICTSD discusses some of the key agreements that currently relate to deforestation. In addition, the article notes some of the social, economic, and environmental impacts that forests have on people's lives, as well as suggestions for 10 goals that states could add under SDG 15.2.


This page, from an international environmental news organization, features recent articles on forests and deforestation throughout the world. Each news story indicates to which country or region each article relates. Scroll through the page to see news stories related to forests in your country's region.

On this site, you can read about global progress on the Millennium Development Goals for several years. Stopping deforestation is part of Goal 7. For information on the new post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, visit https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300.


This website discussed one of UN’s many programs to stop deforestation. The UNEP also has a good site on protected areas, http://www.unep.org/indigenous/Protected-Areas/index.asp.


This site provides access to reports on recent developments related to forests, and other media (see “Outreach”). Click the links on the left (UNFF11, UNFF10, and UNFF9) at http://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/national-reports/index.html to view reports from the last several years. voluntary country reports, posted at. Also check out the UN-REDD Partner Countries page at http://www.unredd.net/index.php?view=list&slug=un-redd-partner-countries-181&option=com_docman&Itemid=134.


This website provides access to background information and the texts of the FCCC and Kyoto Protocol, as well as lists of participating states

World Wildlife Fund (WWF). “Selection of terrestrial ecoregions.” Available at http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/ecoregions/about/habitat_types/selecting_terrestrial_ecoregions/

This is another good place to learn about your country’s climate and forests.